



Pride in Place: Tackling Environmental Incivilities

Local Environmental Problems and Wellbeing



Douglas White

The Carnegie UK Trust is an independent, endowed charitable trust incorporated by Royal Charter. We seek to improve the lives and wellbeing of people throughout the UK and the Republic of Ireland through influencing public policy and demonstrating innovative practice. Our interest in 'environmental incivilities' stems from our commitment, over our 100 year history, to improving the availability and nature of public spaces for the benefit of individuals and communities. This is evidenced by:

- The Trust providing £14,000 of grants to The Conservation Volunteers from 1959 to 1963. Today, The Conservation Volunteers is a leading environmental charity, supporting more than 500,000 people across the UK.
- The Trust making a series of grants totalling more than £87,000, to individual Wildlife Trusts across the UK during the 1970s. This funding allowed the Wildlife Trusts to engage people in practical nature conservation projects in their communities.
- £200,000 being allocated to the development of playing fields in 1927. This money – equivalent to more than £10 million today – allowed the Trust to support more than 1,000 schemes to establish playing fields throughout the UK and Ireland, providing open, public spaces for communities to use for recreation purposes.



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The images on the front cover are courtesy of Civic Pride, Tipton Litter Watch and Redruth Brewery Leats project.

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Please visit www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk for more on the Tackling Incivilities project, including downloads of the eight local case studies, a case study research report, and a research report on secondary data and literature.

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What are environmental incivilities and why do they matter?

Local environmental problems – or incivilities – can have a serious and long-lasting impact on wellbeing and quality of life for individuals and communities. Issues such as vandalism, graffiti, litter, dog mess and discarded rubbish really matter to people:

- More than 70% of people in England are concerned about the appearance of their local area – significantly higher than the level of concern expressed about macro-environmental issues such as climate change¹.
- ‘Clean streets’ are regularly ranked by citizens as one of the most important factors in making somewhere ‘a good place to live’, ahead of issues such as employment, education provision, shopping facilities, traffic congestion and public transport².
- Newspaper reports point out that Members of Parliament receive more complaints about dog mess than almost any other issue³.

The Carnegie UK Trust is concerned that society does not give sufficient attention to the problem of environmental incivilities:

- The policy discourse on the environment is, perhaps unsurprisingly, dominated by issues such as global warming, maritime pollution, peak oil and so on. Although the slogan ‘Think global, act local’ has had a positive impact on a number of these important environmental issues, neighbourhood environmental problems do not always receive the attention that they warrant.
- Social policy responses to environmental incivilities in different parts of the UK have, to date, largely focused on reactive or punitive measures which have been effective in some



areas, but have had limited impact in the most deprived communities. Relatively little attention has been paid by comparison to what might be achieved by empowering communities to tackle the problems caused by incivilities within their own neighbourhoods.

It is of course important for environmental policy to have a strong focus on climate change; and for social policy to seek to tackle a wide range of anti-social behaviour problems. However, evidence suggests that neighbourhood environmental incivilities such as litter, graffiti and dog fouling have a real and meaningful impact on people’s wellbeing on a daily basis – and these problems are currently falling through the gaps in public policy. They are too often seen as trivial and unimportant issues. It is this challenge that we seek to address in this policy paper.

¹Keep Britain Tidy, *Word on our Street* 2011.

²See, for example, the Oxfam Humankind Index 2012 and Ben Page, MORI, ‘Getting Credit Where it’s Due’ 2004.

³John Henley, *The Guardian* 2009.

'The poorer quality of local environments in deprived areas appears to relate closely to past failure to understand the importance of these issues to local residents, resulting in a lack of measures to address them and reduced spending in deprived neighbourhoods, compared to more affluent areas.'

Policy Studies Institute (2004) Environment and Social Justice: Rapid Research and Evidence Review Final Report

In these difficult economic times, with significant reductions in public spending, budgetary pressures are likely to lead to an increase in visible neglect in public spaces, compounding the problem of existing environmental incivilities. The potential for more cost-effective, community-led approaches to play a greater role in tackling the problems caused by incivilities is increasingly attractive. Moreover, there has been a general shift – albeit of varying degrees – in the different parts of the UK towards greater community leadership on a whole range of issues across the policy agenda. As well as the obvious desire to ease pressure on public budgets, this policy attitude is underpinned by a belief that all communities have the potential to develop their own solutions to the issues that they see as priorities, and that all communities have essential assets, such as the skills and knowledge of local residents, upon which successful approaches can be built⁴.

Tackling environmental incivilities – which are highly visible, extremely important to local residents and have a major impact on wellbeing – is intrinsically important. But if communities can be empowered to tackle the incivilities in their area, this could also be a highly effective route to unlocking significant, untapped community energy and expertise that might then be applied

to a whole range of local social challenges. It may also reconnect people who feel marginalised by the larger environment debate, as evidence from the case studies and other research⁵ shows that if citizens can be supported to overcome the environmental problems in their neighbourhood, they are much more likely to take action on other environmental problems. The challenge now for environmental and social policy is to help deliver the new approach that is required.

“If a place looks cared for, people will take more pride in it.”

Civic Pride Volunteer



⁵See for example the 2008 report from BTCV and the University of Essex: 'Evaluating the impact of environmental volunteering on behaviours and attitudes to the environment'.

⁴Carnegie UK Trust, *Appreciating Assets* 2011.

Our Research

The aim of this research by the Carnegie UK Trust is to:

- increase awareness of the link between environmental incivilities and wellbeing;
- promote public policy responses that can help to reduce incivilities; and
- encourage practical action by communities and civil society organisations to tackle environmental incivilities in local neighbourhoods.

To achieve these aims, we have undertaken a desk-research exercise and new, primary qualitative research. The desk-research encompassed a review of the key academic literature examining the link between incivilities and wellbeing; an analysis of existing quantitative data on perceptions and

impact of local incivilities; and a review of public policy responses to incivilities across the UK over the past 15 years. The primary research has produced eight new case studies from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, showcasing community-led projects which have successfully tackled environmental incivilities in their area.

Defining what we mean by ‘incivilities’ is not straightforward. There are many different interpretations and the term is often used interchangeably with anti-social behaviour. Our definition is derived from the 2004 Home Office definition of anti-social behaviour. Within this framework, ‘environmental damage’ such as graffiti, vandalism, rubbish and litter (ie incivility), is defined as one of four sub-sets of anti-social behaviour. It is this sub-set that we have focused on in this project⁶.



Courtesy of Tipton Litter Watch

⁶Home Office 2004. The other subsets are ‘misuse of public space’ (drinking in the street, drug dealing, vehicle related nuisance); ‘disregard for community and personal well-being’ (noisy neighbours and rowdy behaviour); and ‘acts directed at people’ (verbal abuse).

Who suffers from incivilities and what problems do they cause?

'Poor standards of maintenance are highly visible to the public... Whether or not anti-social behaviour is actually witnessed in these or other green spaces, the sense of its presence exerts such a negative effect on public perception that it must be taken seriously.'

CABE Space (2005) Decent parks? Decent behaviour? The link between the quality of parks and user behaviour.

Much of the data on incivilities shows that there has been a marked improvement in these problems in many local areas in the past decade. However, the data also shows that environmental incivilities remain a concern for many communities and that those living in deprived urban neighbourhoods are significantly more likely to experience these problems than others.

These patterns are well-established across the different jurisdictions in the UK⁷. Analysis of the 2008 British Crime Survey, for example, shows that perceptions of environmental damage such as vandalism, graffiti, litter and rubbish were at least 60% higher than average in the 10% most deprived wards in England and Wales, and higher still than in the most affluent wards⁸.

Deprived urban communities are therefore much more likely to experience the negative effects upon wellbeing that incivilities can cause – a phenomenon that some of the literature on

this topic refers to as an issue of 'environmental injustice'. A wealth of qualitative and quantitative evidence illustrates this relationship between environmental incivilities and community and individual wellbeing:

- Living in a poor environment can affect people's health, both psychologically and physically. For example, the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey in 2004 found that even after taking other relevant socio-economic factors into account, those who reported a high level of environmental incivilities in their neighbourhood were more likely to report feelings of anxiety; more likely to say they get depressed; more likely to report that their health is poor for someone of their age; more likely to smoke; and less likely to have walked a mile in the past year⁹.
- While the link between incivilities and actual levels of crime may be a matter of academic dispute¹⁰, what is far less contentious is the link between environmental incivilities and the perception or fear of crime¹¹ – which itself has a clearly detrimental effect on community and personal wellbeing. Many surveys – not least the most recent 'Word on the Streets' report published by Keep Britain Tidy – have found that people continually report feeling safer in cleaner or better-looking areas¹².

⁷As evidenced in data sources such as the British Crime Survey (for England and Wales), the Northern Ireland Crime Survey and the Scottish Household Survey.

⁸British Crime Survey 2008.

⁹Scottish Executive 2005 Scottish Social Attitudes 2004: Public Attitudes and Environmental Justice in Scotland.

¹⁰For example, see Wilson and Kelling's influential – but controversial – 1982 'Broken Windows' theory.

¹¹Bannister, Fyfe and Kearns 2006 'Respectable or Respectful? (In)civility and the City' *Urban Studies* Vol. 43 Nos 5/6 pp 919-936 May 2006.

¹²Keep Britain Tidy, *The Word on the Streets* 2011.

- Environmental incivilities can also have a major impact on citizens' feeling of connection to their local area, on their sense of community cohesion, and on their ability to help shape positive change in their neighbourhood. An evaluation of the Welsh Government's Communities First programme, which aims to improve social and economic outcomes for the most deprived areas in Wales, found that what they called 'niggles', such as fly tipping and dog fouling, often acted as a barrier to communities working together to address more significant social problems. Once these issues were resolved, communities were in a much better position to start tackling larger projects and challenges¹³.

This final point is particularly important. People living in deprived urban areas are not only more likely to suffer from a poor quality local environment – but they are also likely to have limited 'bridging capital' to the external information and decision-making structures which can impact upon the state of their communities¹⁴. This lack of access to resources that can help to address certain difficulties undoubtedly contributes to the sense of helplessness that many communities suffering from incivilities feel about these problems, as well as their ability to tackle them.

“The two bridges were in a shocking state – and had been that way for 30 or 40 years.”
Local resident



Courtesy of Bredhurst Woodland Action Group

¹³Welsh Government, *The Evaluation of Communities First* 2011.

¹⁴Curtice et al, *Public Attitudes and Environmental Justice in Scotland* 2005.

The 'old' approach to solving these problems



Successive administrations in the UK, devolved nations and at local authority level have sought to reduce environmental incivilities – and the action taken has contributed to improvements in many local areas. But as we've just described, incivilities remain a problem for many neighbourhoods – and in deprived urban areas they are often a matter of deep concern.

The initial public policy responses to incivilities in the late 1990s tended, particularly in England and Wales, to focus primarily on legislative measures. The objective was to deter citizens from engaging in anti-social behaviour and to penalise those who did so. While these approaches clearly had an impact, they were costly in terms of staff time and have had insufficient impact in communities suffering high levels of deprivation. These policy initiatives may also have suffered from being seen as a subset of wider anti-social behaviour initiatives, with issues of young people using public spaces and noisy neighbours often taking precedence over the 'niggles' of environmental incivilities. Moreover, it has been argued that approaches to tackle incivilities which are primarily punitive in nature can actually be detrimental to community cohesion, as citizens start to depend on or expect the police and other public authorities to regulate and control behaviour¹⁵.

In recent years, the public policy attitude towards incivilities has begun to shift, and greater weight is now being attached to community-led solutions. This change in emphasis reflects a more general policy shift that is taking place across the different jurisdictions of UK, which is increasingly encouraging communities to take ownership of issues and find resolutions that suit local needs¹⁶.

'Government is overseeing a fundamental shift of power away from Westminster to councils, communities and homes across the nation. A radical localist vision is turning government on its head by giving power to the people, rather than hoarding authority within government.'

Department for Communities and Local Government (2010)

'The Scottish Government believes that the people of Scotland can, and should, take more control over the things that affect their lives. Our communities, both urban and rural, are a rich source of untapped potential, creativity, energy and talent and the process of community empowerment is how we can help to release that potential.'

Alex Neil, Minister for Housing and Communities (2009)

This new approach offers an unprecedented opportunity for local communities to play a far greater role in tackling some of the local problems which they see as a priority in their area – albeit in the context of significant reductions in public spending.

¹⁵Leadbetter, *The Self-Policing Society* – Demos 1996.

¹⁶See, for example, *'Appreciating Assets'* published by the Carnegie UK Trust in February 2011.

The policy shift towards greater community-led solutions is intertwined with the emergence of an ‘assets-based’ approach to policy, which the Carnegie UK Trust firmly supports¹⁷. This approach argues that better social outcomes can be achieved if those seeking to bring about positive change focus on the assets which communities have, rather than what they lack. Every community, however poor or remote, has a wealth of assets within it – it is just that these assets are configured differently in different places. As well as land or buildings, the assets available to any community can include local people’s knowledge and skills; the social networks within the community; natural resources; cultural assets; financial resources; and the external influence that a community has. A community might be lacking in some of these areas, but it will have strengths in others. If citizens can identify and use the assets available to them, this can have a hugely positive impact.

The case studies in this project – and the work of organisations such as The Conservation Volunteers (formerly the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, or BTCV) – clearly illustrate that local environmental incivilities are very much an issue where a community-led, asset-based approach can be highly effective. For example, BTCV previously ran a Big Lottery-funded ‘People’s Places’ programme to provide grants that enabled local communities to tackle environmental problems and improve the green spaces in their neighbourhood. Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of this programme found that for every £1 invested, local areas gained £4 worth of benefits, including increased leisure opportunities and reductions in crime or the perception of crime¹⁸.



Courtesy of Clean Glasgow

¹⁷Carnegie UK Trust, *Appreciating Assets* 2011.

¹⁸BTCV, *Inspiring People, Improving Places* 2008.

A solution for the future – unleashing the power of communities



We carried out research to find out how eight community-led projects from across the UK have taken on the problems caused by environmental incivilities in their area and what they have achieved. The evidence from these case studies is that a community-led model can bring significant reductions in incivilities in places where this was previously not thought to be possible. Not only were problems such as vandalism, graffiti, litter,

rubbish and dog mess removed, but the spaces in which these incivilities were occurring have been dramatically changed and are now delivering significant improvements in local wellbeing.

Table 1 opposite briefly describes the eight case study projects, illustrating how different models can turn a spiral of decline into a virtuous circle:

Courtesy of Civic Pride



Table 1: Case Study Projects

Springhill Garden of Reflection Belfast, Northern Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local park was the focal point for many anti-social activities Area had a high rate of suicide which affected many local people Residents, community groups and public agencies cleared the park of debris and created new plantations and paths New art sculpture installed to remember victims of suicide Park is now a peaceful place for reflection
Llwynhendy Growing Places Carmarthenshire, Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Derelict area in a housing estate had been the site of incivilities for many years Local Communities First programme and residents agreed action plan Site cleared and turned into allotments – of which there had previously been a severe shortage
Civic Pride Rossendale, Lancashire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of litter in town impacting negatively on businesses, and on internal and external perceptions of the area Local businesswoman led formation of a community action group to clear up litter, maintain and improve public spaces, and promote positive behaviour Litter levels in the town have fallen significantly, many public spaces are more attractive and there has been an increase in local pride
Clean Glasgow Woodlands, Glasgow, Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incivilities perceived to be a major problem in the city by local residents. In Woodlands littering, vandalism and fly-tipping were seen to be problematic Local authority launched a citywide programme designed to help public agencies and local communities work together to tackle incivilities There has been a significant reduction in incivilities in Woodlands, and greater awareness of the how these problems can be avoided or addressed
Redruth Brewery Leats Redruth, Cornwall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter, fly-tipping and other incivilities were making a pathway running through the town unsafe and unusable Residents – led by a local councillor – had an initial ‘blitz’ to clean up the pathway Long-term plan established for improving and maintaining the path Many more people now using this resource and a growing impetus to solve the problems of derelict sites situated near the pathway
Tipton Litter Watch Sandwell, West Midlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe problems of litter and fly-tipping led to community activists forming a local action group Annual ‘Big Spring Clean’ has engaged 28,000 young people and collected nearly 120 tonnes of rubbish Many areas of the town now far more useable and attractive An educational programme on local environmental issues developed and delivered in every school throughout the local borough
Bredhurst Woodland Action Group Kent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ancient woodland under threat from fly-tipping and off-road vehicles Local residents formed action group to try to improve the situation More than 100 tonnes of fly-tipping removed and paths throughout the woodlands restored Local authority has introduced an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ERTO), which restricts vehicle access to the woods. Woods are now a resource that are being used and enjoyed by residents and visitors
Urban Eye London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevated motorway flyover cut through neighbourhoods, making these feel dark, oppressive and unwelcoming Local art group cleaned, painted and installed new lighting to dramatically brighten up the flyover Area is now attractive, well-lit and well-used

“Raising the profile of Civic Pride has inspired and encouraged other projects to get going.”

Local community worker

In delivering these activities, the eight projects from across the UK have significantly improved personal and community wellbeing in their neighbourhoods in a number of different ways:

- **Improvements in feelings and perceptions of safety in the local community.** In West London, the motorway flyover renovation means that people feel more assured in the area after dark. In Redruth, Cornwall, the clear-up of the Leats pathway has made residents feel much safer using it.
- **Improvements to the health and well being of local residents.** The improvements to Bredhurst Woods have led to many more people using the woodland for walking and other recreational activities. In Belfast, there is anecdotal evidence that the suicide memorial in the renovated park has increased awareness of suicide and the support available for those affected by it.
- **Building the skills and capacity of community members.** Those leading the eight projects have learnt new skills in project management; relationship building; partnership working; bidding for funding and managing finance. These individuals are now well placed to lead further community activity in the future. Other

“People don’t want to get involved at first, but once you get started and people can see that something is really happening, they start to come forward – it’s like a snowball really.”

**Llanelli Green Network member
and local business owner**

community members have also developed new, specific skills – including woodland management, public art, creating allotments or working with young people. The Brewery Leats project in Redruth has provided opportunities for recovering drug and alcohol addicts to volunteer, building their employability skills.

“Lots of like-minded, generous people putting lots of time into their community... they really care about where they live and want to make it better.”

Rossendale Council official

“Removing litter makes a hell of a difference to the appearance of an area... the little things made a difference. People have noticed change and that’s important and they talk about it... they have made an amazing impact both physically and people noticing change.”

Local Councillor



Courtesy of Urban Eye

- **Enhanced community cohesion.** In all the projects, participants highlighted the ‘social’ nature of the work that has been carried out to tackle the local incivilities, with people coming together from different parts of the community to clear up, renovate and maintain public spaces. In Belfast, the renovation of the local park involved young people from both the Protestant and Catholic parts of the local community. In Tipton, in the West Midlands, the annual ‘Spring Clean’ has a strong focus on bringing together young and old people and challenging the perception that litter is the fault of local young people. In Rossendale, Lancashire, the drive to tackle local environmental incivilities has been led by a local businesswoman and has strengthened the connections between local businesses, community groups and residents.
- **Unlocking the potential of communities to address other social problems.** Simply by doing something together – such as tackling a shared problem like incivilities – local communities are much better placed to deal with other social issues in their area. In Redruth, the process of clearing up the pathway has given community members a new motivation to think about how a long-derelict building which sits next to the pathway might be renovated or transformed. In Llwynhendy in Wales, the local group who have led the transformation of a previously derelict site into a set of community allotments are now considering a new project where citizens with unused garden space at their home allow a gardener to use this space in return for a share of the produce.



Courtesy of Redruth Brewery Leats Project

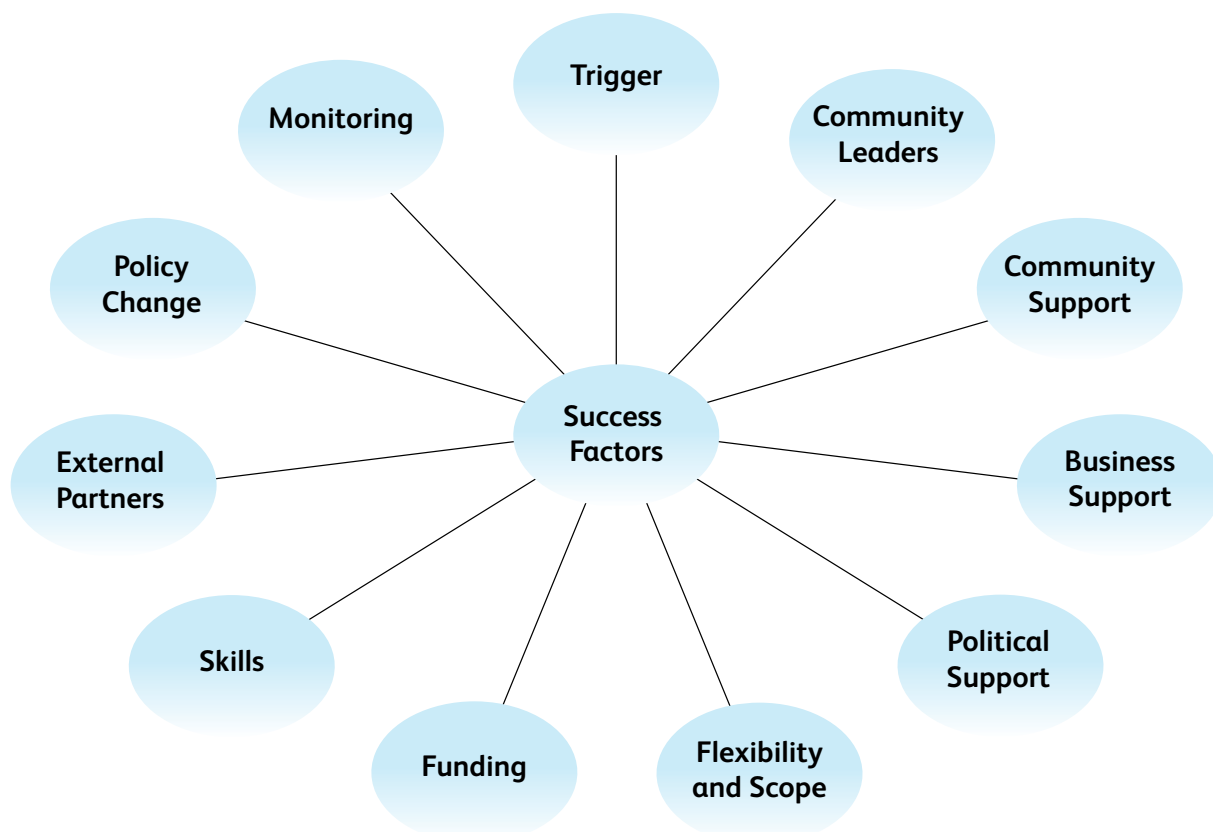
What makes a community approach successful?

What can we learn from these inspirational local examples and how can the improvements achieved in these eight communities from across the UK be realised by all those neighbourhoods which are currently afflicted by environmental incivilities such as litter, vandalism, graffiti and dog mess?

There is no single driver which explains why any community-led model to tackling the problem of local incivilities is successful. All success stories have multiple drivers, which interact and overlap through a series of complex – and often unplanned – developments and opportunities.

But from across the eight case studies a number of factors can be identified as being particularly significant. It is by no means essential for a project to have all of these ingredients if it is to succeed – and different factors are likely to be more significant at different stages in the development of a project. Indeed, it is worth noting that while some of the case study projects have been running for nearly 15 years, others have been going for less than two – and each project has needed different factors to come into play at different stages. Nevertheless, the more of the ingredients a project has at appropriate points during its ‘life cycle’, the higher its chances of success will be.

Chart 1: Community Project Success Factors



Success Factor	What It Means	Case Study Example
A 'trigger' or spark to make something happen	Environmental incivilities are often deeply entrenched and very difficult to remove. A 'trigger' or a 'spark' is required to initiate change. This spark can come from within the community ie a local businessperson, community group or local councillor. Very often, projects emerge from existing community groups or the local infrastructure, but they can also be stimulated from the outside, by a public body or charity.	The Urban Eye project in West London emerged after a 'City Challenge' scheme asked local artists to submit ideas to brighten up the Westway flyover. Although nothing emerged from that scheme, it had 'planted the seed' in the minds of local activists, who took on the problem, and eventually brought about a significant, positive change.
Inspirational, motivated and dedicated community leaders	The enthusiasm and commitment of those involved is critical to the success of any community-led project. These inspirational community leaders must be persistent and willing to take on challenges and issues which they have little previous knowledge and experience of.	These vital catalysts for change were present in all the case study projects – from the local businesswoman in Rossendale, to an award-winning volunteer in Woodlands Glasgow, to the leaders of the local resource centre in Springhill, Belfast.
A broad spectrum of support from across the community	Projects often need a large number of people involved in the early stages to help 'clean up' environmental incivilities. But having a broad spectrum of support is also essential for the long-term sustainability of the project. Improvements in community cohesion are greatly enhanced if there is significant input to the project from different parts of the community.	The clear-up of the pathway in Redruth; the clearing of derelict land in Llwynhendy; the regular clean-ups in Woodlands, Glasgow; and the weekly clear-ups organised by Civic Pride in Rossendale, Lancashire illustrate the value of community participation. In Tipton, engaging with young people and strengthening the relationships between young people and other generations has been one of the central themes of the project, helping to ensure the project is looking to the future. 28,000 young people have participated in the project clean-up activities.
The involvement of local businesses	The private sector is a vital part of any local community – and it often has access to significant political, social and economic capital which can help achieve positive change. Businesses may take responsibility for clearing up litter or graffiti near their premises; fund or sponsor awards or publicity materials; or work directly with a local incivilities project.	In Rossendale, the drive to tackle environmental incivilities in the area has been led by a local businesswoman. In Tipton, the Litter Watch Project receives funding from Serco as part of its contract to deliver environmental services for the local authority.
The 'bridging capital' of political support	Many areas suffering from environmental incivilities struggle to get access to the external resources, guidance and support that they need to tackle these problems. Local politicians can provide this 'bridging capital' and play a vital role in helping to stimulate action.	In Redruth, Cornwall a local councillor was the key driver behind the project to improve the Leats pathway, and the local Mayor was also directly involved in helping to secure private-sector funding for the project. In Llwynhendy, local councillors were very supportive and played a crucial role in driving the project.
Flexibility and scope	It is very difficult to plan how a community-led project to tackle incivilities might develop and grow over many years. Projects should not try to achieve too much too soon, but should be flexible and aware of opportunities that emerge. Small, one-off, local projects can bring benefits that are not immediately obvious such as sparking useful connections which may lead to larger-scale activities emerging in the future.	Tipton Litter Watch began as an anti-litter campaigning organisation, and now has developed and delivers a highly successful environmental programme for schools across the entire local authority area. Bredhurst Woodland Action Group began with a desire to clear the local woods of rubbish and is now investigating the possibility of taking the woods into community ownership.

Access to funding	<p>Many of the case study projects have had access to funding from different sources – including national, devolved and local government, the Big Lottery Fund, other third sector funding bodies, and private businesses.</p> <p>With some exceptions for large, one-off pieces of work, they have generally operated using much smaller grants of only a few thousand pounds at a time, and have boosted their income via fundraising activities and membership schemes. These small grants can deliver a significant return on investment.</p>	<p>In Llwynhendy, the work to turn the derelict site into allotments was funded by the Welsh Government Communities First Programme. In Redruth, the initial costs of clearing up and landscaping the Leats pathway were met by a local authority ‘community chest’ grant. In Springhill, Belfast the City Council and the Arts Council funded the renovation of the local park. The activities of Tipton Litter Watch were initially funded by the Lottery and are now supported by the local council and the private sector. In Rossendale, equipment to support the work of Civic Pride was funded by a local Neighbourhood Forum grant.</p>
Development of skills	<p>While the development of new skills is often an important outcome of local projects to tackle environmental incivilities, it is also vital to the success of the project. A range of skills are likely to be required to make a project successful – including skills in clearing up incivilities safely; skills in designing a new community space that will be attractive and sustainable; financial skills; project planning; leadership and community engagement.</p> <p>Sometimes these skills will already exist in a community – but in other cases, external support will be required to help community members develop their abilities in these areas.</p>	<p>In Bredhurst, members of the Action Group have undertaken in training in woodland management which enables them to lead monthly volunteer activities to clear up the woods.</p> <p>In Llwynhendy, the Communities First Programme provided training to all residents taking ownership of a plot of land following the clean-up of the derelict site, to enable them to manage their plot.</p>
One-off policy initiatives or interventions which facilitate change	<p>Local incivilities can often be tackled most effectively if community activism and ownership is combined with a critical policy intervention or change.</p>	<p>In Bredhurst, the local County Council introduced an Experimental Traffic Order Regulation (ETRO) – the first of its kind in the county – to restrict vehicle access to the woods, thus making it much more difficult for people to dump rubbish. In West London, the breakthrough for the Urban Eye project came when the Highways Agency agreed that the project could use a new type of paint on the motorway flyover.</p>
Engagement of external partners	<p>As well as funding, community-led approaches need other types of external support and resources at different stages of their journey if they are to succeed. This support might be provided by public sector agencies, or by the third sector. It can include help with: project scoping; community consultations; design of public spaces; manual activities such as clean ups, planting or construction; or publicity through websites, newsletters and the local media.</p>	<p>In Bredhurst, the paths in the woodlands were restored by the locally-based Royal Engineers. In Woodlands, Glasgow, the local authority provided all the resources and equipment needed for the local clean-up activities. In Springhill, Belfast, the community consultation exercise to inform the park renovation was supported by Groundwork Northern Ireland. In London, the renovation of the Westway flyover was supported by a partnership, including the original engineering firm, the Highways Agency and the local authority.</p>
Reflecting on success	<p>Capturing and reporting on what has been achieved can boost a project further. It can provide evidence for policymakers and funders who may be able to offer support or resources, and can inspire and encourage project participants and other community members.</p>	<p>Tipton Litter Watch has kept a good record of the number of young people who have taken part in litter clean-up programmes, and of the volume of rubbish collected. The project has won numerous awards, including awards from Keep Britain Tidy and the Chartered Institute of Waste Management.</p>

Discussion and recommendations

If community-led approaches are so effective, why haven't they been established in every neighbourhood where problems of graffiti, litter, dog mess and vandalism are causing misery for citizens? How can we create the conditions in different places which have led to successful outcomes elsewhere? What more needs to be done to make successful approaches work better in the future, and to enable more communities suffering from incivilities to initiate these types of activity in their local area?

Incivilities such as litter, graffiti, vandalism, fly-tipping and dog mess matter to people. They are highly visible, deeply resented and have a significant impact on community and personal wellbeing. Those most likely to suffer from these problems already live in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK. Incivilities must therefore be seen as a form of 'environmental injustice'.

We are now moving into a new era of public policy - driven partly by a change in policy attitude and also by significant pressures upon public finances. This new era presents new opportunities for local communities to take greater control of their own destiny, and find their own solutions to tackling the problems afflicting them. And the evidence from the case studies shows that community-led responses to environmental incivilities can be highly effective and can deliver benefits for communities and individuals.

Furthermore, simply by embarking on a community-led, asset-based approach to tackling incivilities, local communities will open up new possibilities, contacts and relationships that could not have been envisaged at the outset of their work. These links can, in turn, lead to

new opportunities that can be seized upon as the community desires. If communities are empowered to tackle environmental incivilities this can act as a spark to initiate new community action, eventually leading to a whole range of other social, economic and environmental benefits and improvements. Furthermore, a new drive to tackling incivilities could also be built in to other local environmental and social projects - again opening up a gateway to new community action. Environmental incivilities therefore should represent a 'call to arms' for local communities.

Communities cannot make this change by themselves. Leading social and environmental NGOs, policymakers and practitioners have a critical role to play. They must not impose solutions, but help to create the right conditions for community-led action. This area of public policy is hard work and is not glamorous - but by giving a greater focus to these issues, and by being facilitators and enablers, these organisations can help to bring about a transformation in how this policy area operates and the outcomes that it achieves. For this to happen, however, a change in the strategic approach towards incivilities is required by environmental and social policymakers alike.

Traditionally, social policy towards incivilities has been heavily public-sector led; has treated incivilities as a sub-set of anti-social behaviour; and has focused on penalising those responsible for causing incivilities. While this has proved effective in many places, it has not worked in communities where the problem is greatest.

“I’ve lived in the village 20 years and village life can be lonely. But Bredhurst Woodland Action Group has changed all that... I know a lot more people and we’ve all made more friends – that wouldn’t have happened without the Action Group.”

Local resident

If social policy has been ‘environmentally blind’ on the problems of incivilities it may be the case that environmental policy has been ‘socially blind’ on these issues. While some good work has undoubtedly been undertaken on incivilities it is also clear that these problems have received less attention than more macro issues such as climate change. A rebalancing is therefore required – as these street-level environmental incivilities are the very environmental problems that many citizens, particularly those living in deprived urban areas, see as a priority. Furthermore, if communities can be supported to tackle these visible, local environmental problems then they may be more willing and encouraged to take action on a range of other, important, environmental issues.

Environmental and social policy debates are already starting to consider the best approach for achieving systemic change across a range of important challenges. A critical part of this discussion focuses on the values that people hold and the way in which questions are framed in order to achieve change. There is a growing belief that we need to understand these values and frames more comprehensively in the future, and research led

“The big difference now is that people care about the area and tell you if there is a problem – they wouldn’t have bothered before.”

Police Community Support Officer

jointly by Oxfam, the World Wildlife Fund and Action for Children emphasises the importance of social and environmental justice organisations working together to achieve positive, shared outcomes. There may be opportunities to consider how this new way of thinking could be applied to the problem of environmental incivilities.¹⁹

None of the case study projects featured in this report had achieved all of the ‘Success Factors’ listed in the previous chapter – and working towards these factors has presented significant challenges, not least the demands that are placed on the time and capacity of those leading the project. If any community project is to achieve a sufficient number of these success factors in order to deliver positive outcomes, it is likely to need significant support – and this support needs to be more readily and widely available. Communities need support both to identify and maximise the internal or ‘bonding’ social capital in their neighbourhood, and to provide the vital external or ‘bridging’ social capital that can enable them to get access to resources and expertise that would otherwise be out of their reach. This is particularly critical given that environmental incivilities tend to be most prevalent in deprived urban communities, where this bridging capital may not be strong.

Courtesy of Tipton Litter Watch



¹⁹Common Cause, *The Case for Working with our Cultural Values* 2010.

Environmental and social charities, funders, businesses, policymakers and practitioners have a variety of tools and levers at their disposal and they have a central role to play in providing this support. They can do this by:

- Finding the ‘trigger’ or ‘spark’ that can initiate community action. Existing community groups may be interested in taking action on incivilities, but they just need some support to help them on their way. One way in which this might be achieved is through procurement rules. We are likely to see an increasing number of contracts for different environmental services being outsourced by local government in the coming years. There could be the potential within this process to require private companies bidding for these public contracts to fund, support or engage with local community groups engaged in tackling incivilities. Tipton Litter Watch, for example, receives some of its current funding through exactly this type of arrangement. The Community Right to Challenge, established by the Localism Act 2011 may provide further opportunities for communities and private contractors to work together on these issues.
- Simply asking people for their views can also help to spark community action. The Big Lottery has been running ‘The People’s Millions’ programme since 2005, where the public votes to decide which projects in their area should receive funding. Even if projects are not successful in securing funding through this process, the proposed activity often still takes place as the funding campaign has galvanised the local community.
- Supporting local communities to make the most of digital and social media in order to initiate and deliver projects tackling environmental incivilities.
- Recognising that community-led approaches to tackling incivilities have a natural life cycle, or are at different places on the development

“...there has been a change in behaviour. I see people using litter bins much more than they did before.”

Neighbourhood Improvement Volunteer

spectrum. Projects will have peaks and troughs of activity depending on the resources available and the individuals involved, and they must be supported and encouraged to move through the life cycle at an appropriate pace. If projects are pushed too far too early, it may prove detrimental in the long-run. Instead, the focus must be on providing more of the right type of support, for more projects, at different stages of the cycle, in order to achieve an enhanced set of overall outcomes for communities. Support cannot only be provided at the start-up phase – it needs to be available and easy to access whenever projects need it. The key to greater community leadership in the drive to eradicate incivilities is not to demand more of a small number of projects, but to encourage and support many more community groups to address these issues in the way they think best.

- Making small amounts of funding available for community-led, asset-based approaches to tackling incivilities, even in these difficult economic times. The Environment Wales programme, which provides funding to community groups seeking to tackle local environmental issues, is an example of the type of funding programme which could be deployed to support community-led approaches to tackling incivilities. This funding should be available to support innovative approaches, but also for tried and tested activities that have worked well in other areas. It should be seen as a form of preventative spending, given the impact that reducing incivilities can have upon a range of other social and economic problems.

“On the weekends, the woods have become really busy – attracting families as well.”

Local Volunteer

- Identifying and using the enforcement tools at their disposal, in tandem with community-led activities, in order to achieve significant improvements in outcomes. The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order that was used in Bredhurst is an excellent example of this.
- Identifying opportunities to support community-led action to tackle incivilities alongside other local social, environmental or regeneration projects. For example, there may be good opportunities to empower communities to address environmental incivilities in their area as part of local recycling initiatives; housing renewal programmes, or enterprise schemes. Creating this synergy could improve the impact of these initiatives, and reduce local incivilities and the problems that these bring.

“It made people feel part of the community because of their involvement in the art project.”

Local resident

“Children are the adults of tomorrow – if you get the message across to them, you’re halfway sorted.”

Community activist

- Helping community projects to capture and report on what they have achieved. As we undertook this project, it was striking that there is currently very limited information about the

plethora of exciting, effective community-led approaches that are currently being deployed to tackle local environmental incivilities. Indeed, many of the projects we have featured as case studies commented that they had never had the opportunity before to reflect on their project and their achievements before. Monitoring does not need to be based on onerous forms, but can be used to prompt new thinking about an issue and help communities capture what they are doing.

- Encouraging and facilitating those community activists leading incivilities projects to engage with other community projects in their local area and with other projects across the UK which are seeking to address similar problems. For example, the ‘Seeing is Believing Fund’ in Scotland used to provide grants of between £100 and £5,000 to enable community groups to visit and learn from successful projects working on similar issues in other areas. Meanwhile, Clean Up UK and the Campaign for Rural England have set up the ‘Litteraction’ website that provides information and support for groups wishing to tackle litter in their neighbourhood, including details of 500 similar projects across the UK.



Courtesy of Bredhurst Woodland Action Group

The Carnegie UK Trust makes the following recommendations:

To national environmental charities:

- 1 Consider how they can increase their focus on local incivilities as examples of environmental injustice.
- 2 Provide greater challenge and scrutiny to government and funders on the need to tackle environmental incivilities, particularly in deprived urban communities.
- 3 Offer more support to community-led groups seeking to tackle environmental incivilities in their local area.
- 4 Look to form innovative partnerships with charities working on social justice issues to support community-led action on incivilities.

To local government:

- 5 Increase the priority given to tackling environmental incivilities, particularly in deprived urban areas, given the impact these can have on individual and community wellbeing.
- 6 Work in partnership with local communities to identify the main incivilities problems in their neighbourhood and think about how these might be overcome.
- 7 Provide information, advice and support to community-led groups who want to tackle environmental incivilities in their area. The case studies from this project represent one such resource that local authorities could provide to communities in their area.
- 8 Provide small-scale funding to local community groups seeking to tackle the problems of incivilities in their area.
- 9 Build into procurement processes the requirement that service providers bidding for a contract with an environmental element to it, must either work with or provide some financial support to local, community-led projects seeking to tackle incivilities in their area.

To funders:

- 10 Provide community groups with time and assistance to make links with other local projects working on different social issues, and with community-led incivilities projects in other parts of the UK.
- 11 Help community-led projects working on incivilities issues to capture and reflect their achievements in a more comprehensive, but interesting and illustrative way.
- 12 Encourage social and environmental projects tackling other issues to build in action to reduce environmental incivilities as part of their work

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